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Parliamentary groups and political traditions in the debates on EU institutional reform (1979-1999)

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(Article begins on next page)

CRITICAL EUROPEAN STUDIES

Discourses and Counter-discourses on Europe

From the Enlightenment to the EU

Edited by
Manuela Ceretta and
Barbara Curli



Discourses and Counter-discourses on Europe

The European Union plays an increasingly central role in global relations from migration to trade to institutional financial solvency. The formation and continuation of these relations – their narratives and discourses – are rooted in social, political, and economic historical relations emerging at the founding of European states and then substantially augmented in the Post-WWII era. Any rethinking of our European narratives requires a contextualized analysis of the formation of hegemonic discourses.

The book contributes to the ongoing process of 'rethinking' the European project, identity, and institutions, brought about by the end of the Cold War and the current economic and political crisis. Starting from the principle that the present European crisis goes hand in hand with the crisis of its hegemonic discourse, the aim of the volume is to rescue the complexity, the richness, the ambiguity of the discourses on Europe as opposed to the present simplification. The multidisciplinary approach and the long-term perspective permit illuminating scope over multiple discourses, historical periods, and different 'languages', including that of the European institutions.

This text will be of key interest to scholars and students of European Union politics, European integration, European history, and, more broadly, international relations.

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Discourses and Counter-discourses on Europe

From the Enlightenment to the EU

Edited by
**Manuela Ceretta and
Barbara Curli**

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6 Parliamentary groups and political traditions in the debates on EU institutional reform (1979–1999)

Paolo Caraffini and Filippo Maria Giordano

The European People's Party and Socialist parliamentary groups in the European Parliament from 1979 to 1999: a comparison of two processes

This chapter wishes to examine the discursive practices of the European Parliament (EP) and verify if a 'political rhetoric' exists, in a period particularly significant in the history of this European institution. By analysing the parliamentary records, and, more specifically, the speeches delivered during the plenary sessions, this chapter aims at examining the positions expressed by the two main political groups in the European Parliament, the European People's Party (EPP) and the Socialist Group, on several specific steps in terms of institutional reform of the European Community/Union, focussing in particular on those MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) whose discursive practices seemed to express their personal political positions and that of their parliamentary groups more clearly.

The focus of the analysis will be on the political language in parliamentary speeches, in order to understand how the use of a certain semantic may have helped to define or to manifest the position of the main political groups regarding the idea of Europe and the degree of consensus on its integration.¹

The phase under consideration extends over four parliamentary terms, from the first direct elections to the EP, in June 1979, to the Amsterdam Treaty, at a time, therefore, during which the EP was searching for a different and stronger legitimisation, after its direct election. It was also a time of intense transformation and great initiatives, such as the Spinelli Project, the reforms initiated by Jacques Delors, the Single European Act, the Maastricht Treaty and the monetary union, the strengthening of the EP's role, also through the co-decision procedure, the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the opening up of the prospective eastward expansion.

In this framework, the Socialist Group tends to show, progressively, a greater degree of cohesion on the institutional issues, overcoming, at least in part, the initial attitude of Euro-sceptic sectors of the French² and Dutch socialism, of the Danish Social Democrats, the Greek *Pasok*, and of numerous British Labour MEPs still critical towards the Community institutions in the Seventies and the

early Eighties. This was also favoured by the entrance, first, of the Socialists from the Spanish PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*) and from Portugal, and later of those from the former Italian Communist Party, that became the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS, *Partito Democratico della Sinistra*).

It should be remembered that at the European elections of 1979 the Socialist parties had not managed to agree on a shared programme, but only on an 'Appeal to the voters', the outcome of which, incidentally, did not reveal a cohesive orientation. The SPD had judged it too lopsided to the left; some of the Dutch socialists, regarding the Community as an instrument of international corporations, had even called for abstention; and Labour had presented a manifesto of its own in which they were anticipating a British withdrawal from the EEC.³

In contrast, the EPP Group, whose original nucleus was made up of parties with a Christian-democratic background, tends to blur the original European federalism, as well as the reference to a social market economy and, for the Catholic MEPs, to the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, all elements still detectable, for example, in the EPP programme for the elections in June 1979, but also those in 1989, which speaks of the 'United States of Europe'⁴ objective. This takes place with the establishment, between the end of the Eighties and the early Nineties, of the strategy of opening up the parliamentary group to the conservative parties, in order to avoid the Socialists becoming the dominant group in the EP, contrasted by the Italian *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC) and the Christian Democrat parties in Benelux and France. This strategy was supported by the CDU (*Christlich Demokratische Union*) and by the Bavarian CSU (*Christlich-Soziale Union*) and was consolidated with the entry, at first, of the Spanish *Partido Popular* and, then, of the British and the Danish Conservatives. In the following years other parties, such as the Austrian ÖVP (*Österreichische Volkspartei*), the Swedish and Finnish conservative parties, the Portuguese *Partido social democrata*, *Forza Italia* and the French neo-Gaullists,⁵ entered the group.

'The cart before the horse'? The Colombo-Genscher Declaration and the Spinelli Plan

In the first European elections of 1979, the citizens of the nine Member States elected 410 members of parliament: the result of the vote was the dominance of the two major political groups, the Socialist and EPP, with 113 and 107 seats respectively.⁶

The differences between the positions more oriented to supranational integration of the EPP and the more tepid ones on the Socialist side are evident in the first elected legislature. Re-reading the minutes of the parliamentary sessions, the dichotomy appears already in the discussions following the inauguration of the new EP, even during the debate between the two presidents of the Socialist Group, the Belgian Ernest Glinne, and the EPP Group, the leader of the CDU Egon A. Klepsch,⁷ on the election and the role of the President of the EP.⁸

The French liberal Simone Veil was appointed president. In her inaugural speech she called for cohesion of the different political forces in order to enhance the role of the EP and to avoid 'the error of turning the [...]. Assembly into a forum for rivalry and dissent'. For Veil, all Member States were faced with three great challenges: peace, freedom and prosperity: in her view 'they can only be met through the European dimension'.⁹

The vision and the integration model described by Veil did not vary much from those imagined by the EPP Group. The EP had the moral and political task of completing the project of the founding fathers by promoting 'an ever-closer union between the peoples of Europe'. The Belgian Christian Democrat Leo Tindemans insisted on this point, calling for an evolution of the Community into a Union. He referred to the prospects of deeper integration that had been hypothetically put forward already at the Paris Summit of 1974: hypotheses which were then reinforced by the political outcome of the elections of 1979. On that occasion, the then President of the EPP and drafter of the eponymous Report reminded the EP of the three proposals implemented during the meeting between the European Heads of State and Government in the French capital. The first was addressed 'To transform the Summit Conference into a European Council; the second was to draft a report on European Union; and the third was to hold elections by direct universal suffrage to the European Parliament'. Tindemans concluded: 'It is my hope that the second proposal, involving progress towards a European Union, will not fall by the wayside and that suggestions for action in this area will be made in future'.¹⁰

In this sense, the EP elected by universal suffrage had 'a special responsibility'. Tindemans's words, connected perhaps to a strategy of political legitimacy of the EP after its election by direct universal suffrage, clearly demonstrate the EPP's European inclination. During the first Parliamentary term, the Christian Democrats tapped into the ongoing project of the founding fathers – reference to whom is frequent in MEPs' discourse and rhetoric in this political area – and leveraged the new role of the EP that should have acted 'as a more effective motive force in European integration'.

Even the president of the European Commission, British Labour Roy Jenkins, acknowledged the success of the first universal suffrage elections to the EP in his speech and he enthusiastically greeted the prospects that this event was opening for the future of Europe.¹¹ He called for the cooperation between institutions, as a means to search for the common interest: 'we – whether Parliament, Council or Commission – shall need all our combined strength and inherent unity',¹² and he indicated the supranational way as the route to take 'to sustain the impetus of the European ideal, to withstand the deep-seated problems which now confront us'.¹³ Finally, addressing the debating chamber, and rebuking the attitude of his own country, he recalled that the Parliament's concern and opportunity 'are to ensure that Community issues, not the narrow lines of national politics, [must] dominate the discussion'.¹⁴ That said, Jenkins acknowledged the difficult economic situation and reiterated the responsibility and the role that the Community would have had in the economic policies to counter recession, inflation and unemployment:

What is absolutely clear – said the President of the European Commission – is that the ability of the Community to survive and to prosper depends on our joint determination to preserve what we have already achieved, to build on this, and, above all, to keep a vision and commitment to make progress towards a greater European unity.¹⁵

If for Jenkins, as much as for the Socialist MEPs, the Community had a duty to concentrate its political resources on economic and social policies, the EPP Group was more keen on the 'structural' and institutional aspects of the European construction. In fact, if we wanted to find the *leitmotiv* on European integration in the parliamentary speeches of the Christian Democrats in the first parliamentary term, we could summarize it in three words that clearly give the political direction of the PPE with respect to their expectations on the Community. First, the EPP Group refers to *solidarity* among member countries and between the peoples of Europe, not to mention the political *independence* of the Community from the superpowers, especially in some key areas, and of the EP from the other Community institutions, in its actions in favour of the integration process. Finally, they often reiterate the idea of *cooperation* both with third countries and with other international organizations. The EPP Group discourse in favour of Europe revolved around these terms, which clearly have a general scope and a tactical political essence. We must also add the expression 'European Union', which entailed the long term political and strategic objective shared by all the EPP MEPs in this first phase of the new EP's life. 'European Union', an expression with a double meaning, because unifying both in the discursive use and in the political objective.

In this respect, we must not forget the so called 'Genscher-Colombo Plan' in which this expression was brought up again. The initiative started off in 1981 thanks to the action of the then Italian Foreign Minister, the Christian Democrat Emilio Colombo, and his German counterpart, the Liberal Democrat Hans-Dietrich Genscher. After the German Minister's presentation of the Plan to the EP, there is a clear consonance of views by the Christian Democrat representatives in the EP, who are compactly aligned in favour of the reform project. This consonance is also apparent at a political language level: the terms of the German and Italian ministers are similar to those found in the speeches of the EPP Group members that take the floor and, as mentioned, words like 'solidarity', 'independence', 'cooperation' and 'unity' stand out. These terms, after all, reveal the remarkable convergence of purpose regarding a certain idea of European integration both within the EPP and among EPP members and Liberals covering national political appointments.¹⁶ Genscher and Colombo shared the idea that 'only by standing together will this Europe have the strength needed to put these aims and values to good effect'.¹⁷ The Christian Democrat MEPs agreed on this, being largely geared towards the promotion of an institutional reform and the support of the Community's transformation into a Union. The Greek members of the group also supported the prospect of political union, as revealed in the speech by Konstantinos Kallias, who, with a note of optimism,

said that despite the 'long experience of the reservations and national egoism which still affect the relations between cooperating countries' the 'expectation that Europe is progressing, even though slowly, towards political union'¹⁸ had not entirely disappeared.

The Plan was discussed in Parliament during the session of 19 November 1981, and won the support of large sections of the EP, albeit with exceptions and with some suspicion on the Socialist side. The Socialists judged the Plan as both too liberal and too cautious in terms of institutional reform prospects. The Dutch Socialist Doeke Eisma, who had gradually come closer to Altiero Spinelli's position, would push the integration process 'further by reinforcing what already exists and extending the integration process to cover new sectors', strengthening the democratic control of the Parliament, thus abolishing 'the practice of unanimity and introducing, instead, majority decisions in the Council'¹⁹ and extending the Community's competence in the field of political cooperation.

Eisma's position, however, remained in the minority within his group; the Socialists raised, indeed, a number of concerns about the European Union project designed by Genscher and Colombo, especially in terms of economic and social outlook that any deepening of integration would have entailed. In fact, as pointed out by Glime, for the Socialists the 'social justice inside the Community [was] a much more urgent imperative than any diplomatic breakthrough or institutional success, however impressive'.²⁰ However, they:

take heart from the fact that Mr Colombo [...] laid great stress on the need to strengthen common economic policy by greater convergence and the need for instruments to correct the imbalances and contradictions which, unfortunately, still persist throughout the Community.²¹

The Socialists indeed had the tendency to steer attention towards the issues of unemployment, labour, economic recovery, dialogue and European social space; all of these, if unfulfilled, would have seriously risked compromising the credibility and the future of the Community, and on this axis the varied and mixed soul of the Socialist group was almost unanimously in agreement. In other words, European citizens, especially the unemployed, 'will judge the European Community on the practical steps it takes to improve employment and not on the measures we implement to reinforce our institutions'.²²

Finally, worthy of notice is the Socialists' position, shared also by the EPP Group, regarding the need to push the integration process to a turning point through the EP, especially after the validation of the popular vote. Even in this case, however, the Socialists remained sceptical because they perceived the Community as an entity that was still distant from its citizens, subject to the continuous risk of bureaucratic involution. As Glime explained in one of his speeches, referring to the Community's laborious system, the risk for the Community was to take up 'Byzantine ways'.²³ Indeed, he noted the lack of transparency of its institutions, reiterating that Europe 'has still not made a sufficient

impression on its people; [...] Europe is too intermittent, too obscure to be understood and accepted by each and everyone of its citizens'.²⁴

Therefore, if we want to summarize the substantial difference in position that emerged between the two groups with regards to the prospective deepening of European integration, the most evident contrast was the priority: the Socialists' emphasis was laid on the term 'social' reform, the EPP Group focussed on 'institutional' reform. This gap was partly filled by the compromise reached with the 'Spinelli Project', that, toward the end of the first parliamentary term, managed to concentrate the consensus of the two largest European parliamentary groups, albeit with obvious internal rifts.

The Draft Treaty of the European Union, promoted by Altiero Spinelli just after his election to the EP, was the most significant attempt to give a new constitutional arrangement to the Community, thus turning it into the European Union. As a matter of fact, from 1980 Spinelli had organized an action aimed at promoting the reform of the Treaties, first informally, with the meetings of the Crocodile Club, then through a parliamentary intergroup, made up of MEPs from different Member States and belonging to different political families. On 9 July 1981, after lengthy consultations and repeated debates, Spinelli was able to push through a resolution in the EP establishing the creation of an ad hoc Committee that, starting in 1982, was expected to produce a draft reform. On that occasion, and even more so during the final vote on the Spinelli Project, despite the strong differences in ideology and perspective, a forced convergence would be reached between the EPP Group and the Socialists, although deep concerns and obvious contrasts continued to persist between them. The project, approved by the MEPs in February 1984 with approximately 88 per cent of the votes, was still able to catalyse the consensus from more than 50 per cent of the Socialists, having been acknowledged as consistent and coherent even by its opponents. Amongst these one cannot ignore an important part coming right from the Socialist area. Nevertheless, we have to remember the efforts made by the Institutional Affairs Committee, chaired by Italian Socialist Mauro Ferri, in healing the Socialists' internal rift.

The work had been developed on the basis of the resolution dated 14 September 1983,²⁵ which had been reached with a strenuous compromise. The Socialists and the EPP Group had therefore reached an agreement in principle that was apparent from the official statements of their respective Presidents. Glinne, for example, regarded 'the preliminary draft treaty' as balanced and realistic, and expressed the hope that 'it should be the project of the whole Parliament and not only of the present majority'.²⁶ This did not prevent critical and contrary positions from emerging during the debate, highlighting the Euroscepticism of the Danish, British, Greek and French Socialists. All this is clear in the speeches during the Project's final presentation and voting session on 14 February 1984.

The critical stance inside the Socialist Group was once again dictated primarily by the concern of British Labour, which was rather Eurosceptic on economic issues and openly Euro-critical towards the Community system. Barbara

Castle, for instance, accused the report of putting 'the cart before the horse'.²⁷ Indeed, in the face of the economic crisis, Castle said that it 'would be absurd to strengthen the Community institutions so as to impose these disastrous policies as common ones'; and she concluded by stating that she would not be willing 'to subject Britain's vital interests or my own social and economic views to majority votes, either in this Parliament or in the Council of Ministers'.²⁸ The Dutch Socialist Robert Cohen, using the same metaphor, thought that promoting 'the institutional set-up of the European Union [was] rather like putting the cart before the horse',²⁹ regarding the possibility of the Community really being able to solve Europe's economic and social issues. That said, notwithstanding the reservations, Cohen confirmed his support of the project, also on behalf of his colleagues, but he explained how his vote in favour maintained a critical emphasis, 'in the awareness that the essential issue in Europe is not the institutions but a new policy. Institutions cannot be a substitute for a policy'.³⁰

Conversely, the speeches of the EPP Group showed greater uniformity with regard to the Project. The Greek Konstantinos Kallias declared himself 'unreservedly and unequivocally in favour of the European Union'.³¹ According to the Italian Pietro Adornino:

We of the Group of the European People's Party, who have contributed to the formulation of these proposals, appreciate their worth. And this appreciation is a contributory factor to our approval of the draft treaty that is before us, and for which we have fought with conviction.³²

In conclusion, we can consider that beyond a strong internal discrepancy within the Socialist area, most of the group endorsed the project, supporting it during the vote. In any case, the divergence between the Socialist and the EPP Group remained obvious especially after examining the voters' data. Against the 237 votes in favour, twelve out of thirty-one who were not in favour were Socialist (four Danes, two Irish, six British), while thirty-four of the forty-three absentees belonged to the Socialist area (five Germans, seven Greeks, eighteen French, one Dutch and three British).³³

'The mouse born of the Kirchberg mountain': the Single European Act

The result of the European elections on 14–17 June 1984 did not produce substantial changes to the parliamentary balance of the EP. The Socialist Group was confirmed in first place with nearly 30 per cent of the seats. The EPP Group was the second group of the EP, with over 25 per cent of the seats. The gap would be widened, however, with the arrival of the Spanish and Portuguese delegations, who expanded the socialist ranks with as many as thirty-five members of parliament.³⁴

This parliamentary term was characterized not only by the accession of Spain and Portugal, but also by the beginning, as of January 1985, of the mandate of

the Commission chaired by Jacques Delors, and then by the White Paper on the completion of the internal market, by the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) under the Luxembourg Presidency that would lead to the Single European Act (SEA), as a partial response of national governments to the already-mentioned Spinelli Project.

With respect to the institutional issues, there is still a substantial uniformity of the EPP Group, as there remains, in this parliamentary term, a prominent Christian Democrat tradition; and, conversely, there is still the persistence of divisions in the Socialist family, with conflicting positions of British, Danish and Greek MEPs – the latter, though, with usually more softened tones.

It should also be noted that, in view of the aforementioned European elections of June 1984, Labour and the Danish Social Democrats had not undersigned the part of the electoral Manifesto of the Confederation of Socialist parties of the European Community which supported the need for greater coordination within the framework of the European Monetary System (EMS) and for an increase of the EP's powers; moreover, they had not endorsed the report drawn up by the Institutional Committee of the Confederation, presided over by the German SPD member Helga Kohnen, with which an attempt was made to define a common position on the issue of institutional reforms.³⁵

The Greek MEP, Spyridon Plaskovitis, in his speech in plenary on 9 July 1985, while making clear that there was no opposition by the *Pasok* 'to the idea of European Union, stressed that, in the absence of balance in the economic and social development of all Member States, stronger countries would have a chance to impose their policies.³⁶ On foreign policy issues, then, Greece was threatened by Turkey, according to Plaskovitis, who said

So how can my country commit itself in advance to any foreign policy when nothing is forthcoming from the European Community towards a solution of those two most serious and outstanding problems, which concern vital Hellenistic interests? And how can we abandon the principle of unanimity when matters of such a kind and scale remain outstanding?³⁷

And he added:

With the Spinelli report, we have arrived at the point of being asked to accept formally the creation of a two-rate Europe in the name of European Union, and a repeal of the Treaties of Rome [...]. We are totally opposed to such solutions, which essentially lead not to progress, but to a backsliding of the Community to its early stages.³⁸

The speech of the Italian Socialist Carlo Tognoli was very different. He sponsored the need to quickly reach a reform of the Treaties, with the strengthening of the Community institutions and a greater involvement of the European Parliament. He said: 'Variations can be considered; the road can be made wider or narrower, but the route is as indicated'.³⁹

The leader of the EPP Group, Egon A. Klepsch, placed emphasis on the extension of a majority vote in the Council, with the use of vetoes only for valid and proven reasons, and the co-decision of the EP. Klepsch then declared:

We hope that all twelve will follow this road together, but we cannot deny that we are a little tired of waiting for the slowest vehicle in the convoy, especially when its driver keeps claiming that [he] is not quite sure which way to go, whether the opposite direction is not perhaps the right one.⁴⁰

Also during the plenary debate, the Italian Christian Democrat Roberto Formigoni, President of the Political Committee of the EP, expressed his satisfaction regarding the outcome of the European Council in Milan, which had been held a few days earlier, on 28 and 29 June 1985. The deferment to an IGC was fraught with dangers, however, as for the first time in its history the European Council had resorted to a majority vote. The EP should have demanded that it be involved in the work of the IGC and that the latter not degenerate into proposals of mere intergovernmental cooperation, pursuing the Spinelli Project instead. Formigoni was proposing then to ponder upon the idea of a referendum on a European scale, to ask citizens to express themselves on European integration.⁴¹

On 9 September 1985, opening day of the IGC in Luxembourg, the EP President, Pierre Pflimlin, read out a letter, during the session, addressed to the President-in-Office of the Council, Luxembourg's Foreign Minister, Jacques Poos, in which he called for a radical institutional reform with a strengthening of Parliament's powers, taking into account the aforementioned Spinelli Project.⁴² Note that the Danish Social Democrat, Ove Fich, on behalf of his national delegation in the parliamentary group, expressed his disagreement with the content of the letter.⁴³

Following the Luxembourg European Council on 2–3 December 1985, during the session on the 11th of the month, the British Labour Thomas Megahy declared that the results of the summit marked the end of the draft EP treaty, seeing the EP forced to accept a compromise, 'but we could have saved a lot of fine rhetoric over all these years'. This was to show 'the futility of all the time and energy that has been spent on talking about institutional reforms'.⁴⁴ He rejected the idea of monetary union, as it represented 'an undesirable path of the freedom of Member Governments to pursue their own policy'. Megahy then judged it utopian to think that the internal market would be beneficial, since it was impossible that it would actually work.⁴⁵

A very critical judgment on the completion of the internal market was also expressed by another Labour MEP, George Robert Cryer, because in his view they were selling illusions: not only would the unemployment issue have not been settled, but, on the contrary, problems would have grown. With regards to the institutional issues, Cryer believed that States could only cooperate 'as equals, not in subjection to an appointed bureaucracy and certainly not subject to this place which cannot manage its own affairs very well, let alone taking over those of the Member States'.⁴⁶

Another Labour MEP, Alfred Lomas, returned to economic issues, stressing that the major problems, crisis and unemployment, were not being tackled. There was a great deal of attention for the interests of business, but not of the workers. Moreover, he added that the Labour Party was not opposed to a reform of the Treaties, provided they were aimed at reducing 'the powers of those who seek to exploit working people in Europe', by rerouting competences to the national parliaments, 'where governments elected by the people can carry out the programmes on which they were elected. That is what we believe to be real democracy'. Regarding political union then, even though there was a clear need to act in a coordinated manner in some sectors, it was in his view 'an illusion to think that governments of quite different political natures can come together and start issuing common statements, particularly on world affairs'.⁴⁷

A tough speech came from the Danish Socialdemocrat, Ejner Hovgård Christiansen, since he considered that the EP, in recent years, had negatively affected the European debate with 'ambitious plans', 'with its union plans, with the draft for the Spinelli Treaty'. It had, in fact, 'distorted the dialogue on the development of the cooperation'. He elicited an acknowledgement of the non-relevance of a treaty intended to create a European Union and that 'the ignition system for the union firework display no longer works' and that 'what has now come to us from the Intergovernmental Conference has nothing to do with the ambitious and fanciful institutional changes which the European Parliament wants and has committed itself to, but is concerned with the content of cooperation'.⁴⁸

The German Social Democrat Gerd Walter, almost in response to his Danish colleague, claimed not to understand the motivations of Denmark's hostility to an extension of the EP's powers. The decisions taken in Luxembourg meant, in fact, greater tasks for the EEC and a minor influence of national parliaments, without an equivalent strengthening of the EP, which would serve to balance the powers lost by the national legislatures. This constituted, according to Walter, 'a dangerous way'.⁴⁹

Once again on 11 December 1985, the Socialist leader, Rudi Arndt,⁵⁰ who was also a member of the SPD, acknowledged the rifts within the Socialist family. However, some progress had been made, even though not all expected decisions had sprung up from the Luxembourg Summit.⁵¹ Even the French Socialist Georges Sutra de Germa believed that there had been 'real and definite progress'.⁵²

This view was shared by several members of the EPP Group, such as the Luxembourgier Nicolas Estgen, who, whilst describing unsatisfactory results, nevertheless emphasized that steps forward had been made.⁵³ The Frenchman Jacques Mallet certainly did not bestow upon the Luxembourg European Council the definition of 'historic event', adding that: 'We had dreamed of a cathedral and are being given a shack'. Nevertheless, the results were a starting point, had the EP used its power of influence with determination.⁵⁴ Along the same lines was the member of *Nea Dimokratia*, Panayotis Lambrias, who called for a constructive dialogue with the other Community institutions, most notably the Council of Ministers.⁵⁵

It should be noted, though, that among the MEPs of the EPP there were quite a number of critical comments, dissatisfied with the inadequacy of the outcome of the IGC, such as in the cases of the vice president of the group, the Italian Christian Democrat Giovanni Giavazzi,⁵⁶ of the aforementioned Roberto Formigoni⁵⁷ or of the Dutch Bouke Beumer.⁵⁸

Uncompromising was the comment by the *Democrazia Cristiana* MEP, Maria Luisa Cassamagnago, who expressed deep disappointment at the outcome of the European Council on 2 and 3 December 1985, because of the inability of the governments to seize this 'historic opportunity', preferring a compromise that was creating 'nothing new' and, indeed, in some areas, was making steps backwards. There appeared to be no real strengthening of the EP and the Luxembourg compromise of 1966, which granted the Member States a right of veto, had not been abolished. The same goes for the European Political Cooperation.⁵⁹ The Belgian Fernand Herman, of the French speaking *Parti Social-chrétien*, declared quite ironically in his speech:

[...] the Community menagerie, which already contained a wealth of species, with the monetary snake, the kangaroo and crocodile, was joined a week ago by a new animal: the mouse born of the Kirchberg mountain. It really is a curious mouse that has been presented to the European Parliament, a variable geometry mouse. It could turn into a lion. The mouse that roars, as in the famous film, but presented before the Danish or British Parliament, it becomes a miserable shrew.

Mrs Thatcher and Mr Schlüter said before their parliaments: this makes no difference, don't worry, don't lose any sleep, we are not losing any powers, there is no change.

Here, on the other hand, it is viewed either as a new Messina or as a new departure towards a glorious European future.

Well, such a difference of interpretation is evidence enough of poor drafting.⁶⁰

'Are we building a Europe for the economy or are we building a Europe for its citizens?': the path from Maastricht to Amsterdam

During the third parliamentary term (1989–1994), the institutional issues were of great importance in view of the negotiations for the Treaty of Maastricht. In the EP, attention was therefore drawn on both IGCs, one on Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the other on political union, launched in Rome in December 1990 and that led to the signing of the Treaty on 7 February 1992.

In terms of the political groups, as was previously mentioned, this was the legislature which, as far as the EPP is concerned, gave way to the expansion strategy towards the conservative parties, which would then be achieved, in particular, with the accession of the former members of the European Democrats Group: first the *Partido Popular*, already in 1989; then, later, in May 1992, the

British and the Danish Conservatives.⁶¹ The weight of these last two national political parties in the EPP parliamentary group was not yet felt in the debates held in plenary during the proceedings of the IGCs. The Spanish representatives, for their part, toed a line which was substantially aligned with the Christian Democrat one, in favour of the development of a supranational Europe.⁶²

In the Socialist Group, there was the notable entrance of the Italian PDS in favour of a line of support for the process of European integration. The Labour Party under the leadership of Neil Kinnock was beginning a long march, partly because of the national election defeats,⁶³ which led, in 1994, to the rise of Tony Blair and to policies which were certainly more open on issues of European integration, as is already noticeable – it must be said – in the floor speeches of Labour MEPs during the drafting of the Maastricht Treaty.

In relation to this very phase, the representative of the Socialist Group, Vincenzo Mattina, holding his speech in plenary on 21 November 1990 just a few weeks before the opening of the IGC, wished for the creation of a European federation,⁶⁴ whilst, however, the leader of the same group, the Frenchman Jean-Pierre Cot, noted that a clear understanding of the architecture of the political union was lacking, and stressed the need to simplify, and not complicate things by, for example, proposals for a second Chamber. It was necessary to make Europe more legible to the citizens, hence the abolition of the right to veto and extending majority voting.⁶⁵

In the EPP Group, Egon A. Klepsch, opposite Cot, argued for the need for a two-chamber system with one House as expression of the States and one directly elected by the citizens.⁶⁶ Marcelino Oreja Aguirre, member of the *Partido Popular*, declared on 12 June 1991 that the goal was indeed to be:

A federal Europe, based on the principle of subsidiarity, which guarantees economic and social cohesion between the Member States and their regions [...] a Europe which is equipped with strong, democratic institutions, with a [...] a single currency and common foreign and defence policies.⁶⁷

The British Labour MEP David Martin stressed the importance of achieving the EP co-decision, because otherwise the IGCs would have been a failure.⁶⁸ Even the Dutch Socialist Alman Metten, in a speech on 12 June 1991, during Luxembourg's final phase of the presidency, observed that a strengthening of the role of the Council of Ministers was springing up from the work of the two IGCs, but there needed to be a co-decision by the EP to provide a response to the issue of democratic deficit.⁶⁹

A few days short of the Dutch Presidency's start, on 9 July 1991, the Italian MEP Antonio La Pergola was pushing to go beyond 'the mercantile, consumistic [sic] view of integration', overcoming the internal differences and speaking with one voice in foreign policy. The Italian MEP declared himself in favour of a Community that does not stifle the national State, since the political union was not intended as 'a superstate'.⁷⁰ His colleague, Cot, on 9 October 1991, emphasized the need for reform of the Treaties before further enlargements, so as not to

risk a downgrade to a more confederal structure.⁷¹ The following month he also expressed a critical opinion on the project submitted by the Netherlands, since the structure of the old Community did not appear substantially reformed, placing it, moreover, next to intergovernmental 'European unions' and added:

In doing so, you are turning your back on the Single Act approach, you are proposing a Europe in separate compartments, you are exacerbating the democratic deficit.⁷²

Among the members of the EPP, the Luxembourgier Nicolas Estgen, on 9 July 1991, noted the need for practical solutions, since it was not possible to please 'all the ayatollahs of parliamentary federalism'.⁷³ In that same session, however, the vice president of the group, the Greek Georgios Saridakis, judged the recently ended Luxembourg presidency to be a lost opportunity. Transferring powers to the Community, without creating an effective legislative authority, reduced its democratic character. The EPP Group would continue to call for 'a greater remit for the Parliament, covering new areas such as foreign policy and security and defence, working towards greater federation'.⁷⁴ This was confirmed by Klepsch, on 20 November 1991, who stated that 'Christian Democrats as a whole both inside and outside this House are determined to see the European Community become a federation'. Regarding the often mentioned co-decision of the EP, Klepsch welcomed the idea of a gradual process, but ratifying the principle within the Treaties.⁷⁵

Horst Langes, the vice president of the EPP Group, was rather harsh in his comment with respect to the work done by the Dutch presidency of his fellow countryman Klepsch. In fact, he declared:

What your presidency is proposing amounts to dismantling the Treaty of Rome. It is a leap backwards rather than a leap forward and the Dutch Presidency has failed to provide a minimum level for genuine cooperation and dialogue between Parliament and the Council.⁷⁶

The previous month, as a demonstration of the weight of national origins, the Dutch MEP Jean J. M. Penders, again in the EPP Group, had stressed that the EP had expressed two major objections to the proposal made by the Luxembourg Presidency: the little significance afforded to the role of the EP itself and, in addition, the pillar structure, because it would have formed an Intergovernmental Union next to the supranational Community. On the contrary, the Dutch Presidency's merit was that it had tried to avoid 'that mistake'.⁷⁷

Another of the important issues discussed was that of the uniform electoral procedure – the French EPP MEP Jean-Louis Bourlanges, on 8 October 1991, commenting the De Cucht report⁷⁸ with critical tones, described how it could be defined as a result of disappointing outcomes, 'a "bladeless knife", one without a handle moreover, in other words no knife at all'. He furthermore reiterated his group's support on the principle of proportional representation.⁷⁹

Astrid Lulling, of the Luxembourg *Parti Chrétien-social*, took the floor in the same session, stating that if the EP had not yet managed to give itself a uniform electoral procedure, this was due to the desire to push itself far beyond its competences and added:

[...] it is attempting to interfere in the constitutional laws of the Member States [...].

Insofar as sovereign states exist, it is up to them to decide whether or not to change their constitutions in order to grant non-nationals the right to vote [...].

To our minds, the right to vote and stand for election is linked to nationality.⁸⁰

In some speeches the emphasis was placed on the relationship between the EP and national parliaments. On 9 October 1991, the Portuguese Socialist MEP João Cravinho, commenting the report on this matter by Maurice Duverger, on behalf of the Institutional Affairs Committee, stressed the need for an involvement of national parliaments in the Community process, in a complementary role to the EP.⁸¹

Maria Luisa Cassamagnago observed that the parliaments of the Member States had to make an effort in the supervision and management activity of their respective governments on the positions to be taken in the Council of Ministers. At a Community level, it was necessary to ensure the EP's full participation in the decision-making processes, with a close cooperation with the national assemblies, even through the parliamentary groups' action.⁸²

Regarding the relationship between the national and European dimensions, one must reiterate the change in attitude of many British Labour MEPs, compared to the previous term. Indeed, on 12 June 1991, Alan John Donnelly, apart from stressing the importance of the Economic and Monetary Union, declared:

What the people of the United Kingdom want to see is not for Britain to be in a second-class carriage in a two-speed Europe. We want to be in the centre of the argument. [...]

Please do not relegate the United Kingdom to some sort of second-class carriage in a two-speed Europe. The people of the United Kingdom do not want that.⁸³

On 20 November of that year, another British member, Glyn Ford, declared that Labour had become aware that the internal market would require a single currency as well as common standards in environmental and social issues. And he added:

We want a European Community and not just a common market.

Without majority voting, Community standards will end up being those of the lowest common denominator [...] we will have a distorted, crippled

Community, [...]. The Labour Party recognizes in our external relations that the economic and political potential in the Community is enormous. [...] a wider Community and a deeper Community are inseparable. We in the Labour Party recognize that if the Community is to have such important responsibilities then the issue of democratic accountability is fundamental. That is why the Labour Party Conference approved the principle of co-decision powers for the European Parliament.⁸⁴

The Danish Socialdemocrat Ejner Hovgård Christiansen, although with obvious caution, judged the Economic and Monetary Union as a natural extension of the creation of the internal market. However, he was remarking that it should be the politicians elected by the people in the Council of Ministers and EP who managed the economic cooperation and not the Executive Board of a European central bank or the European Commission.⁸⁵

There were frequent speeches in which it was pointed out that a deeper economic and social 'cohesion' would constitute the *sine qua non* of economic and monetary union. The aforementioned João Cravinho argued that one could decide to set up a definitive transfer of sovereignty to the European institutions only in the presence of a true sense of solidarity.⁸⁶ In the same direction went the speeches of the group colleagues, including the Greek Christos Papoutsis⁸⁷ and the Dutch *Partij van de Arbeid* MEP, Win van Velzen.⁸⁸ The Belgian Raymond Dury stated her fear that Europe, devoid of a social dimension and 'characterized by premeditated social dumping', would charge the less fortunate not only with the implementation of the monetary union, but also with the political one. Dury brought up the example of a greater strictness and the adoption of a majority vote procedure in the Council, in the event of failure to comply with the budget deficit limits, while on the subject of tax harmonization decisions would be taken unanimously, and concluded: 'Are we building a Europe for the economy or are we building a Europe for its citizens?'.⁸⁹ Also in the EPP Group, MEPs John Walls Cushmanan,⁹⁰ of the Irish Fine Gael, and Ioannis Psemazoglou, of *Nea Dimokratia*, both emphasized the importance of economic and social cohesion.⁹¹

In the next parliamentary term (1994–1999), the reform process consolidated in the Treaty of Amsterdam and, while there was a growing Eurocriticism in the EPP Group, because of the aforementioned opening to the Conservative parties, the heterogeneity of the internal positions within the Socialist group decreased.

In the session on 13 December 1995, ahead of the Madrid European Council which led to the IGC in Turin in March 1996, the discussion of the programme, by the Reflection Group, headed by the Spaniard Carlos Westendorp, on the hypotheses of reform, revealed no overt internal rifts or conflicts between the two biggest European political groups.⁹² This derived from the fact that, within the Reflection Group, the EP was represented by the German Christian Democrat Elmar Brok and the French Socialist Elisabeth Guigou.

Even the British Labour and Scandinavian Socialists now seemed more inclined to accept a reform of the Treaties that would go in the direction of further integration, including issues of social policy, that were always high on

the Socialist's agenda. The Briton Stephen Hughes urged both for an employment plan and an institutional reform to ensure its implementation⁹³ and the Finn, Uluu Iivari, alongside reflections on the Common Foreign and Security Policy, emphasized the urgent need to move towards the Economic and Monetary Union to fight unemployment.⁹⁴

In the session dated 13 March 1996, during the debate on the report by the Institutional Affairs Committee regarding the political priorities of the EP in the IGC in Turin, Labour was united in favour of the reform guidelines drawn by the French Socialist, Raymonde Dury, and the Dutch Hanja Maij-Wegen, member of the EPP Group. Dury's perspective was clear on the political priorities: social justice, citizenship, fundamental rights, internal and external security, solidarity, development of the social and ecological dimensions, employment policy and economic and social cohesion.⁹⁵ The position of the British representatives was clear when the Labour MEP Pauline Green stated that 'the Socialist Group overwhelmingly endorse[d] the Dury/Maij-Wegen report',⁹⁶ since the document 'defend[ed] and extend[ed] the desires of [the] group' to see Europe based 'on the principles of clarity, openness, democracy and effectiveness'.⁹⁷ Wayne David also welcomed the proposals in the report, especially with regards to a 'simplification of the [...] legislative procedures and more powers for the European Parliament in relation to both the Commission and the Council',⁹⁸ thus upholding the reverse of Labour's tendency to always oppose the strengthening of supranational institutions. British Labour's approval echoed that of the Scandinavian socialists, from Swedish Maj-Lis Löf to the Finn Iivari.⁹⁹

In the EPP Group, the conservative Dane, Poul Schlüter, had sided in favour of a simplification of the Community, agreeing with the Socialists on the need to change 'our institutions, so that they can continue to be effective',¹⁰⁰ in view of future openings. The Swedish colleague Charlotte Cederschiöld, of the *Moderala Samlingspartiet*, clarified the ways in which the EU should proceed on reforms: 'Europe must be modernised but cannot be involved in everything'.¹⁰¹

However, the clearest idea on the positions of the Conservatives, who had entered the EPP Group, was given by the Tory MEP Brendan Donnelly, who recalled how the British Conservatives had 'always supported the opt-out of the social chapter'.¹⁰² He also rejected the hypothesis of a 'fusion of the pillars established in the Maastricht Treaty'.¹⁰³ From his point of view, to expect governments to abandon 'intergovernmentalism [was], as we say in English, to tilt at windmills'.¹⁰⁴

Returning to the Socialist Group, the shift of the British and the Scandinavians to more favourable positions on European integration is also apparent in the disappointment with which some MEPs received the report by the Dutch State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Michiel Patijn, on the results of the informal European Council in Noordwijk on 23 May 1997, which led to the signing of the Treaty of Amsterdam.¹⁰⁵ Green expressed pessimism on the agreements reached at the Summit because they disregarded many aspects considered vital by the Socialist Group, including social and environmental policies, as well as a

substantial reform of the treaty going in the direction of more democracy and functionality of the institutional system. In fact it was the British Labour MEP's opinion that it was now 'an imperative to prepare the Union for enlargement'.¹⁰⁶

Conclusions

A dialectical relationship between conservatism and change is evident in the activities of the European Parliament. The polarization reversal among the EPP Group and the Socialists is confirmed after the examination of the parliamentary acts. In the Socialist Group, a significant division switches to greater cohesion, starting in the late Eighties and early Nineties; while the opposite occurs in the EPP Group, with the emergence of critical positions towards the European integration process, especially as a result of the accession of the British and the Scandinavian Conservatives. Starting from 1992, it is possible to detect on certain issues how a greater convergence is registered between much of the Socialist Group and the traditional Christian Democrat part of the EPP than within the latter, more precisely between the original nucleus and the other conservative parties that later entered the group.¹⁰⁷

This convergence proceeded in line with the beginning of a new phase in the European integration process, in which, as a result of the crises of the Nineties, a profound change in the European social and institutional order was noticed. The historical change marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Empire helped to close the gap among the main political forces in the European Parliament, often leading them to support common positions and to defend the prerogatives of the supranational institution. Consequently, the European Parliament has experienced a slow process of politicization.

It should also be noted in this regard that the position of the MEPs within their parliamentary group was characterized by greater autonomy and less internal discipline than one can observe in the national parliaments.¹⁰⁸ The selections for the candidatures at the elections are still responsibility of the national parties, not of the Europarties, so leading to a strong loyalty to the national constituency. Regarding the specific instance of the EPP Group, it should also be added that, at the time of their entry into the parliamentary group, the Conservative MEPs obtained the right to vote differently from the group,¹⁰⁹ noting that their political line was not comparable to the founding nucleus of the parliamentary group and the European party, so sacrificing a more rigorous programmatic convergence, but with the aim, as we said, of an enlargement strategy competing with the Socialist Group. We have also to consider that the British Conservative delegation within the EPP Group contained a significantly higher proportion of pro-Europeans than the rest of the national party, but their number diminished over time.¹¹⁰

However, as stated by Matthew Gabel and Simon Hix, 'the Socialists became more pro-European as they began to endorse regulatory capitalism at the European and national levels (instead of welfare capitalism at the domestic level)', while, on the contrary, 'the EEP became more anti-European as they began to

advocate neoliberal economic policies'.¹¹¹ In effect, some sectors of the EPP originally linked to the core Christian Democrat foundation became critical towards a role considered too interventionist of the common institutions, especially in the economic, social and civil liberties.

Among the Socialists, on the contrary, considering the economic globalization and taking note of the difficulty in offering answers with economic policies hinged on national bases, more attention on the European dimension as a resource, as a possible response to the economic issues, spread gradually, even in those areas of the group that were at the beginning critical or at least suspicious.¹¹²

Finally, in the discursive use of some Socialist MEPs we can also observe that the emphasis laid on the term 'social' reform, in the first term that we have examined, gave place to the adjective 'institutional', revealing a growing attention to the reform of the European institutions.

Notes

- 1 See Bostanci 2013, 172–84.
- 2 Reference is made in particular to the CERES (Centre d'Études, de Recherches et d'Éducation Socialiste). On issues of European integration closer to the Communists and, in contrast, in the French Socialist Party, with Michel Rocard's most pro-European wing, see Delwit 1995, 93; Pasquucci and Verzichelli 2004, 139–40.
- 3 See Pasquucci and Verzichelli 2004, 114–16.
- 4 See Gabel and Hix 2002, 949–50; Hanley 2004, 254.
- 5 It should be considered that, with the accession of the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland, there had been a widening of the Socialist parliamentary group in the EP (Labour, however, had appointed its deputies only in 1975); while the centre-right parties of the new Member States, the conservative non Christian Democrat ones, had not joined the EPP Group, but had given birth to an independent parliamentary group. See Van Hecke 2006, 154–56; Wintoniak 2006, 173–76; Delwit 2004, 140–41, 144–46. The implosion of the DC (*Democrazia Cristiana*) and the electoral weakening of the Benelux Christian Democrat political parties favoured the rise of the CDU-CSU line, see Delwit 2004, 147; Hix and Lesse 2002, 76.
- 6 See Parlement Européen 2009; Pasquucci and Verzichelli 2004; Judge and Earnshaw 2003; Kreppel 2002.
- 7 Eggon A. Klepsch was chairman of the EPP Group in the years 1977–1982 and 1984–1992. He was President of the EP from 1992 to 1994.
- 8 See Official Journal of the European Communities (henceforth OJEC), Debates of the European Parliament (henceforth DEP), n. 244, 1979, 12ff.
- 9 Ibid., 20–24.
- 10 Ibid., 31.
- 11 Ibid., 27–29.
- 12 Ibid., 27.
- 13 Ibid., 27.
- 14 Ibid., 28.
- 15 Ibid., 28.
- 16 See OJEC, DEP, n. 1–277, 1981, 215ff.
- 17 Ibid., 219.
- 18 Ibid., 233.
- 19 Ibid., 234–35.
- 20 Ibid., 223.
- 21 Ibid., 223.

- 22 Ibid., 223.
- 23 See OJEC, DEP, n. 244, 1979, 30.
- 24 Ibid., 29.
- 25 See OJEC, DEP, n. 1–303, 1983, 27–198.
- 26 See OJEC, DEP, n. 1–309, 1984, 36.
- 27 Ibid., 98.
- 28 Ibid., 98.
- 29 Ibid., 79.
- 30 Ibid., 79.
- 31 Ibid., 80.
- 32 Ibid., 83.
- 33 Lodge 1984, 396.
- 34 See Pasquucci and Verzichelli 2004, 141–45.
- 35 See Hix and Lesse 2002, 38–40.
- 36 See OJEC, DEP, n. 2–328, 1985, 55.
- 37 Ibid., 55.
- 38 Ibid., 55.
- 39 Ibid., 66–67.
- 40 Ibid., 50.
- 41 Ibid., 60–61.
- 42 See OJEC, DEP, n. 2–329, 1985, 2.
- 43 Ibid., 2.
- 44 See OJEC, DEP, n. 2–333, 1985, 165–66.
- 45 Ibid., 165–66.
- 46 Ibid., 176.
- 47 Ibid., 157–58.
- 48 Ibid., 163–64.
- 49 Ibid., 161–62. This position was shared by Mark Clinton, member of the Fine Gael in the EPP Group, see *ibid.*, 170–71.
- 50 Rudi Arndt was the Socialist leader in the EP from 1984 to 1989.
- 51 Ibid., 128–29.
- 52 Ibid., 148–49.
- 53 Ibid., 159–60.
- 54 Ibid., 162–63.
- 55 Ibid., 168–69.
- 56 Ibid., 154–55.
- 57 Incidentally, Formigoni supported the necessity of a new IGC by 1987. See *ibid.*, 171.
- 58 Ibid., 164–65.
- 59 Ibid., 167.
- 60 Ibid., 171–72.
- 61 See Delwit 2004, 144–45.
- 62 See Samaniego Boneu 2004, 365–70, 380–93; Delwit 2004, 144–45.
- 63 It should be noted that, after its defeat in the general elections of May 1979, Labour took a line which was markedly socialist and national. The manifesto for the general election of 1983 promised the United Kingdom's exit from the EEC in the case of victory. The electoral defeats, both in 1983 and in 1987, forced the party to review its position on this and other issues. During the European elections of 1989, the Labour Party gained forty-five of the eighty-one British seats and, also, since then the party was strongly attracted to the social aspects of the internal market and understood that the EU could safeguard some civil and social rights from the policies of the Conservatives. Worth noting is the party's acceptance of the Economic and Monetary Union project, during the summit of the European Socialist leaders held in Paris on 29 June 1989. See Bideleux 2004, 229–31; Hix and Lesse 2002, 46.

- 64 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-396, 1990, 162.
- 65 Ibid., 152-54.
- 66 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-396, 1990, 162, 154-55.
- 67 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-406, 1991, 151.
- 68 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-398, 1991, 123.
- 69 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-406, 1991, 136-37.
- 70 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-407, 1991, 63-64.
- 71 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-409, 1991, 136-37.
- 72 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-411, 1991, 127.
- 73 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-407, 1991, 56.
- 74 Ibid., 62-63.
- 75 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-411, 1991, 128-29.
- 76 Ibid., 143.
- 77 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-409, 1991, 143. Penders reiterated this concept on 20 November 1991, stating: '[...] it is absolutely essential that the federal idea [...] should be retained in the Treaty'. See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-411, 1991, 137-38.
- 78 The Flemish Liberal, Karel De Gucht, on behalf of the Committee on Institutional Affairs, had submitted a resolution which established the guidelines of the EP on the uniform electoral procedure. See Pasquinucci and Verziehelli 2004, 67-68.
- 79 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-409, 1991, 80-81.
- 80 Ibid., 101-02.
- 81 Ibid., 108-09.
- 82 Ibid., 109.
- 83 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-406, 1991, 148.
- 84 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-411, 1991, 142-43.
- 85 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-406, 1991, 150.
- 86 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-398, 1991, 120-21.
- 87 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-407, 1991, 99.
- 88 Ibid., 100.
- 89 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-411, 1991, 145-46.
- 90 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-406, 1991, 148.
- 91 See OJEC, DEP, n. 3-407, 1991, 101.
- 92 See OJEC, DEP, n. 4-462, 1996, 169ff.
- 93 Ibid., 189.
- 94 Ibid., 190.
- 95 See OJEC, DEP, n. 4-478, 1997, 94.
- 96 Ibid., 103.
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- 98 Ibid., 122.
- 99 Ibid., 120-21.
- 100 Ibid., 118.
- 101 Ibid., 118-19.
- 102 Ibid., 121.
- 103 Ibid., 121.
- 104 Ibid., 121.
- 105 See OJEC, DEP, n. 4-501, 1998, 15ff.
- 106 Ibid., 19.
- 107 Hanley 2004, 256.
- 108 Viviani 2009, 145-47.
- 109 Lynch and Whitaker 2008, 33.
- 110 Ibid., 37.
- 111 Gabel and Hix 2002, 951.
- 112 See Grazi 2015, 81.

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7 The political groups of the European Parliament in the face of Yugoslavia's disintegration and the discursive framing of EU foreign policy (1991–1995)

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Introduction

The disintegration of Yugoslavia was one of the milestones in the construction of European Community/Union (EC/EU) foreign policy. The EU made use of a variety of instruments of intervention, but showed all the political and institutional limits of a player that, with the end of the Cold War and its involvement in the resolution of that crisis, would have wanted to revitalize its international role and show that it could take on increasing responsibility in the management of world peace. Just the acknowledgement of these limits gave the EU the impetus, at the end of the 1990s, to develop a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), questioning, among other things, the relations between Europe and the United States in the management of peace and international security.

Literature has extensively analysed the participation of the EU and its Member States in the Yugoslav crisis, highlighting their difficulties and their failure (Lucarelli 2000; Biermann 2004; Glaurdić 2011). This chapter, however, aims to analyse the contribution of the European Parliament (EP) to this participation, through the study of parliamentary debates between 1991 and 1995, that is, between the outbreak of the crisis and the Dayton agreement which marked the end of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Through the study of the minutes of the parliamentary sessions published in the Official Journal of the European Communities, we will examine the positions adopted and the proposals that emerged from the parliamentary groups, and the political culture that inspired them at the sight of the dissolution of a European multi-ethnic state, the reappearance of war in Europe for the first time since 1945 and the recurrence of the 'Balkan issue'. We will also be able to characterize the EP's contribution to the European effort in managing the crisis and to the understanding and overcoming of the limits shown by the EU in this context.

The first part of the chapter looks, from the EP's point of view, at the EC's response to the crisis outbreak and to Slovenia and Croatia's proclamation of independence. Pivotal will be the debates within the EP relating to the principle of self-determination. The second part will focus on the role of the EC/EU in the management of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and on the construction of parliamentary groups' political positions regarding the diplomatic resolution of the conflict, the military intervention and the role of the EU and the United States.